

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-03 H-01
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O P 262134Z AUG 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KIGALI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CARR, CASC, UG, US

SUBJECT: AMERICANS MISSING IN UGANDA

REF: A. STATE 203848 (NOTAL) B. STATE 204073 (NOTAL)
C. NAIROBI 10931 (NOTAL)

1. DEPARTMENT HAS NOW GONE INTO OLDER PASSPORT RECORDS
AND WHILE A RICHARD SANKEY AND AN AUSTIN BROWN OF THE
APPROPRIATE AGE HAVE BEEN FOUND, TELEPHONE CHECKS REVEAL
SANKEY IS IN U.S. AND BROWN IS WITH ARMY IN KOREA. WE
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ARE NOW PREPARED TO CONCLUDE THAT PERSONS NAMED IN REPORTS
ARE DEFINITELY NOT IDENTIFIABLE FROM PPT RECORDS.

2. WHILE DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THAT NAME CHECK RESULTS
SUBSTANTIALLY RAISE PROBABILITY THAT REPORTS ARE EMBELL-
ISHED RUMORS OR OUTRIGHT FABRICATION, WE CANNOT CEASE
TRYING TO CONFIRM OR DISPROVE. REQUEST NAIROBI CONTINUE

EFFORTS TO INTERVIEW TWO REFUGEE SOURCES DIRECTLY, AND THAT FRG EMBASSY KAMPALA CONTINUE ITS INVESTIGATION.

3. WHILE STORY REF. C HAS NOT YET REACHED PRESS OR WIRE SERVICES IN US, DEPARTMENT HAS PREPARED CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE WHICH HAS JUST BEEN USED TO RESPOND TO INQUIRY FROM LONDON TIMES, WHICH HAD STORY FROM NAIROBI. TEXT AS FOLLOWS: .

Q. THERE IS A REPORT FROM NAIROBI TODAY THAT THREE AMERICAN TOURISTS HAVE BEEN KILLED IN UGANDA, TOGETHER WITH THREE UGANDAN GIRLS, AND THAT THEIR HEADS HAVE BEEN MOUNTED AS TROPHIES FOR AMIN. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT?

A. WE FIRST HEARD FROM A UGANDAN REFUGEE SOURCE IN NAIROBI ABOUT A WEEK AGO THAT THREE AMERICAN TOURISTS HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN KAMPALA. WE WERE NATURALLY CONCERNED. AS ALWAYS, OUR FIRST STEP WAS TO CHECK OUR PASSPORT FILES -- WE COULD FIND NOBODY ON RECORD THAT CHECKED WITH THE NAMES GIVEN IN THE REPORT. WE ALSO ASKED THE FRG, WHICH REPRESENTS OUR INTERESTS IN KAMPALA, TO LOOK INTO THE REPORT, AND ASKED OUR EMBASSIES IN COUNTRIES BORDERING ON UGANDA TO MAKE INQUIRIES THERE. THE WEST GERMANS ARE STILL AWAITING A FORMAL REPLY FROM THE UGANDAN GOVERNMENT, BUT THEIR INFORMAL CHECKS IN KAMPALA HAVE CAST SOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DOUBT ON THE ACCURACY OF THE REPORT. OUR EMBASSIES HAVE FOUND NOTHING SO FAR. MEANWHILE, THE REPORT YOU DESCRIBE SURFACED IN NAIROBI YESTERDAY (AUGUST 25). IT APPARENTLY REFERS TO THE SAME THREE INDIVIDUALS

AT THIS POINT, WE HAVE NOTHING AT ALL TO CORROBORATE THESE REPORTS. BUT OBVIOUSLY, WE ARE CONTINUING URGENT EFFORTS TO LEARN THE TRUTH.

Q. WHAT IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S ADVICE TO AMERICANS CONSIDERING TRAVEL TO UGANDA?

A. DUE TO THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF CONDITIONS WITHIN UGANDA, THE POSSIBLE HAZARDS TO THE SAFETY OF AMERICANS THERE, AND OUR INABILITY SINCE THE CLOSURE OF OUR EMBASSY IN 1973 TO PROVIDE DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO AMERICANS WHO MIGHT GET INTO DIFFICULTIES, WE CANNOT ENCOURAGE AMERICANS TO TRAVEL TO UGANDA. ANY AMERICANS WHO DO TRAVEL TO UGANDA ARE ADVISED TO MAKE THEIR PRESENCE KNOWN TO THE WEST GERMANY EMBASSY IN KAMPALA, WHICH REPRESENTS AMERICAN INTERESTS AND WILL ATTEMPT TO RENDER ASSISTANCE IF NECESSARY.

CHRISTOPHER

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